

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS
FLOOD CONTROL,
REGIONAL PARKS, SURVEYOR,
TRANSPORTATION,
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Information on

COUNTY ROADS



MAY 2001

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS
DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this pamphlet is written in broad non-technical language for general understanding only. The pamphlet is not intended to provide legal interpretation or any form of legal advice.

This pamphlet contains information that answers many of the frequently asked questions about our County Roads and the County Maintained Road System. We hope that this pamphlet also provides the reader with a better understanding of some of the many transportation functions provided by the Department of Public Works.

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Facts About San Bernardino County

San Bernardino County is the largest county in the continental United States. Encompassing an area of over 20,000 square miles, it covers more territory than the states of Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Massachusetts combined. The county has a population of about 2,000,000 persons and is one of the fastest growing urban counties in the State of California during the past decade.

The county can be described by its three distinct geographical regions - the Valley - the Mountains, and the Desert. Each region is topographically and climatically unique and each differs in population, size and density.

The urbanized Valley Region covers 480 square miles of the southwest portion of the county. This region contains fifteen incorporated cities and is home to over seventy percent of the county's total population.

The Mountain Region is characterized by the rugged topography of the San Gabriel and the San Bernardino Mountain ranges. The population is concentrated in several core communities and one incorporated city, but only represents about three percent of the County population total.

The Desert Region contains ninety percent of the total land area of the County and includes portions of Death Valley National Park, the Mojave Preserve as well as large areas set aside for Military Reservations. The population, twenty seven percent of the county total, is scattered throughout the region in small communities and eight incorporated cities.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
FLOOD CONTROL,
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM,
REGIONAL PARKS, SURVEYOR,
TRANSPORTATION,
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

825 East Third Street
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0835

Department Information:

**TELEPHONE(909) 387-8104
FAX (909)387-8130**

EMERGENCY

**During Regular Hours call (909) 387-8063
After 5:00 PM Weekdays & Holidays call
County Emergency Services (Communications Center)
(909) 356-3805**

Department of Public Works - Transportation

Under the Department of Public Works, the Transportation Division is responsible for providing safe and driveable public roadways in the unincorporated areas of the county. This transportation function is further divided into various areas of responsibility including Operations, Traffic, Transportation Program Management, Design and Contracts.

The Department's function also includes contracting for, and coordination of, public transit activities, including the services provided by Omnitrans in the unincorporated portions of the San Bernardino Valley and Dial-A-Ride systems in a number of unincorporated communities in the Mountain and Desert areas of the county. County staff are members of the Technical Advisory Committees of the various Transit Agencies.

Operations

The major transportation functions of the department are the operation, maintenance and improvement of the county maintained road system which currently includes 2,825.90 miles of road, independent of federal and state maintained roads, non-maintained, special district maintained and private roads in the unincorporated areas of the county.

While management and technical activities are centered in the San Bernardino area, maintenance functions are provided through Maintenance District Yards located at key points throughout the county to best serve the road network spanning 20,000 square miles of the county.

The county road budget is projected to be \$40 million from all sources including specific project monies and monies from the state per year to provide for resurfacing, rehabilitation, construction and routine maintenance activities. Since, the funding available for road purposes is very limited compared to the needs of the vast system, all work is prioritized in order to insure the best use of the available funds. Among the high priorities are to provide needed maintenance to protect the investment in the existing roads and to provide improvements

to the safety, capacity, and serviceability of the roads.

Operations maintenance activities include, surface preservation, patching and crack filling, grading of unpaved roads, shoulder maintenance, plowing snow, traffic signal maintenance, weed abatement, traffic control maintenance, storm repairs and clean-up, maintenance of bridges, culverts, drainage pipes, inlets, ditches, dikes and gutters.

For the 00/01 fiscal year the annual maintenance program provided the following activities:

Major asphalt overlays on 315 miles of roads.
Chip sealing on 315 miles of (different) roads.
Grading of 533 miles of unpaved roads.
552 miles of snow plowing on the mountain roads.
Reconstruction of nearly 11 miles of roads.
Widening of nearly 18 miles of roads.
Installation or upgrading of 26 traffic signals
Maintenance on hundreds of bridges, thousands of culverts, pipes, ditches, dikes, curbs and gutters.

Many road improvements are accomplished through cooperative efforts with other public agencies. Such cooperation maximizes the return on the dollar expended, both in time and avoiding duplication of effort, as well as providing opportunities for funding not otherwise available. Agencies involved include cities, special districts, utility companies, regional, state and federal agencies.

Road Maintenance Districts

The San Bernardino County Maintained Road System (CMRS) has 2,825.90 centerline miles as will be certified July 1, 2001 to the State Controller. Of these certified system miles, 2,292.53 miles are paved and 533.37 miles are dirt roads the majority of which have been in the system since it was formally designated in the late 1940's.

Transportation Operations, divided into two regions, provide maintenance on the system roads from the district (maintenance yards) as follows:

Valley & Mountain Region

District 1	(Chino)	} (West Valley)
District 3	(Fontana)	
(District 4)	Activated only during snow removal Operations.	
District 5	(San Bernardino)	(East Valley)
District 7	(Crestline)	
District 8	(Blue Jay)	
District 9	(Big Bear)	

Desert Region:

District 2	(Big River)
District 10	(Twentynine Palms)
District 11	(Baldy Mesa)
District 12	(Barstow)
District 13	(Trona)
District 14	(Mountain Pass)
District 15	(Needles)
District 13	(Trona)
District 16	(Apple Valley)

MAINTENANCE DISTRICTS

<u>District</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Supervisor</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
1 Chino	7000 Merrill "E" Chino, CA 91710	*Bob Evans	(909) 597-6270
2 Big River	7172 Tecumseh PO Box 2490 Big River, CA 92242	Kevin Canepa	(760) 665-8873
3 Fontana	17618 Arrow Route Fontana, CA 92335	*Bob Evans	(909) 823-8811
4 Running Springs (Snow Removal)	1920 Wilderness Running Springs, CA 92382		(909) 867-3683
5 East Valley	825 E Third St Bldg 6 San Bernardino, CA 92415	John Latsko	(909) 387-8071
7 Crestline	23188 Crest Forest Dr. PO Box 3381 Crestline, CA 92325	Bruce Nelson	(909) 338-2140
8 Blue Jay	Daley Canyon Rd & SH189 PO Box 791 Blue Jay, CA 92317	Isaias Gomez	(909) 336-0680
9 Big Bear Lake	PO Box 274 Big Bear Lake CA 92315	Jim Dibel	(909) 866-2167
10 Twentynine Palms	73663 Manana Twentynine Palms CA 92277	Henry Guillen	(760) 367-9504
11 Baldy Mesa	12397 Sycamore St. RR#1 Victorville, CA 92392	Carl Sevelin	(760) 949-0335
12 Barstow	29802 Highway 58 Barstow, CA 92311	Ed Hartwell	(760) 256-3631
13 Trona	80311 Trona Road Trona, CA 93562	Larry Blake	(760) 372-5888
14 Baker	56500 SH 127 PO Box 750 Baker, CA 92309	Delvin Holmes	(760) 733-4736
15 Needles	PO Box 707 @ Airport Needles, CA 92363	Don Toy	(760) 326-2535
16 Apple Valley	11923 Joshua AVSR Box 387 Apple Valley, CA 92307	Craig Sherman	(760) 247-8208

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Map of the California Desert Region showing Yards 1 through 16. The map includes county boundaries for Inyo, Kern, and Riverside, and the state boundary with Nevada. Key locations marked include Trona, Baker, Barstow, Victorville, Hesperia, Amboy, Cadiz, Yucca Valley, and 29 Palms. Highways 39, 15, 10, 78, 52, and 210 are shown. The map is titled "Map of the California Desert Region" and is dated "1964".

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY ROAD MAINTENANCE YARDS

FUNDING

Funds for maintenance and construction of county roads are derived from a variety of sources. The majority of the money available on a yearly basis comes from the State Fuel Tax of 18 cents per gallon. The state allocates fuel taxes and fees to be used only for transportation purposes to cities and counties statewide.

Generally speaking, the county's share of the fuel tax funds is proportionally allocated on the number of registered vehicles. This translates to just over \$60.00 annually for each vehicle registered in the county.

Since San Bernardino is a very large county with many sparsely populated and widely separated communities, the revenue in terms of dollars per mile of road is very low. The more densely populated counties such as Orange or Los Angeles receive ten and five times respectively as much State Fuel tax money per mile of road for their county road systems. Over the years the ability of the county to maintain and improve the road system has been severely affected by inflation. Since the fuel tax is on a per gallon basis, the amount paid by the average driver has actually declined over the last several years due to more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Other sources of funding include the 1/2 cent sales tax surcharge passed by the voters in 1989 to be used in the improvement of Transportation Facilities (Measure I). Measure I monies may only be used in the geographic area where it is generated. Measure I monies have defined percentages that must be spent on arterial roads, on local roads and on transit.

The county actively pursues special grant funds that are made available on a competitive basis from various programs, such as from the Air Quality Management Districts or through State and Federal Aid Programs. The dollar amounts are limited and variable and competition is fierce.

Although the county has had measurable success in obtaining additional specific project monies, these latter sources of funds are erratic, depending upon the competitive climate and selection criteria.

Under AB 2928, the state made an allocation to the county of \$9 million specifically for maintenance, for fiscal year 2000/2001, with an estimated \$2.3 million to be made available for each of the next five years.

To help mitigate the impacts of growth, Transportation Facilities Fee Plans have been established in various areas of the county. The transportation needs for these areas are calculated and a fee established that is paid through the land development process. These fees are reserved to complete transportation projects in the fee area.

It should be noted that no property taxes are currently used for maintenance or improvement of the County Maintained Road System.

County Maintained Road System

According to State Law, California Street & Highway Code, Section 2150, neither road fund revenues nor County General Funds may be expended on roads that have not been accepted into the County Maintained Road System by the Board of Supervisors (with the concurrence of the state). Although, as mentioned elsewhere in this pamphlet, approximately 533 miles of unpaved roads are within the system and carry considerable public traffic and also provide access to homes and other developed properties, there have never been enough funds available to bring these roads up to current county road standards.

In addition to the 2,825.90 miles of road within the system, there are many additional miles of road in the county that are being used by the general public, which are not in the maintained system. The county may not perform any work on these roads.

Acceptance of Roads Into the Maintained System

The Board of Supervisors receives many requests annually to accept additional roads into the Maintained System. Due to the funding limitations previously described, that make it difficult to maintain the roads currently in the system, it is impossible to honor most of these requests.

In 1964, the Board of Supervisors adopted a policy outlining criteria for accepting roads into the system. Generally, these criteria require that appropriate right-of-way dedication, and construction of road improvements, including pavement, be done to county standards at no cost to the county. The specific requirements vary considerably depending upon location and the classification of the road.

In a few rare exceptions to this policy, the Board of Supervisors has accepted roads into the system without requiring improvements. Such exceptions have been limited to roads determined by the Board of Supervisors to be necessary in the general county interest, such as roads connecting communities or where a road was needed to serve a major public facility.

In 1981, because of increasing concerns about the lack of road funding, the Board of Supervisors adopted a policy to be able to delete roads from the system or reject roads for acceptance into the system based on the following criteria:

- a. The county highway does not provide the primary access to occupied properties as determined by inspection of all available routes, or
- b. Traffic on the county highway is intermittent and of low volume as determined by counting the Average Daily Traffic (ADT). The minimum ADT is established as 75 vehicles per day.

Prior to the termination of maintenance of a county highway, public hearings are conducted to receive testimony regarding the proposed deletion from the county system. This is done in order to provide an opportunity for all interested parties to provide comment on the proposed actions.

Alternate Maintenance Methods

Since the costs to fulfill the requirements of the county policy for acceptance of roads into the County Maintained Road System are usually very high, a common solution for maintenance on non-system roads is for the individual property owners involved to hire a private contractor to do grading or other maintenance work or perform the work themselves. In many areas, a special road assessment is paid by property owners for routine road maintenance. This program is administered by the county through the County Special Districts Department.

The Special Districts Department is located at:

157 West Fifth Street, Second Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0450

Public Information Number (909) 387-5940

"Buyer Beware"

One of the reasons a land purchase, especially in the mountain or desert areas of the county appears to be a "good deal" is that the road or roads serving the parcel are not in the County Maintained Road System.

Prospective purchasers should check to see if the county maintains the road serving the parcel they are considering. If the county does not maintain the road, buyers must realize that they, and no other, will be responsible for, and pay any costs associated with, road maintenance problems. All too often, new property owners find this out after they have purchased the land.

Questions and Answers

The following are answers to frequently asked questions about county roads:

1. Q. Who build new roads?

A. The majority of new roads are constructed by private developers as a condition of residential or commercial development. Existing roads in the County Maintained Road System (CMRS) are maintained by the county. Existing maintained roads may be upgraded by the county to improve safety and increase capacity.
2. Q. Can my property be taken for public road purposes?

A. An owner's property rights are guaranteed by federal and state constitutions and applicable state laws. Should your property or a portion of it be needed for the benefit of the public, the county has the right, under the principle of eminent domain, to purchase private property for public use. The owner will be compensated for it at fair market value.
3. Q. What is eminent domain and condemnation?

A. Eminent domain is the right of government to purchase private property for public use. Condemnation is a legal process by which private property is acquired through proceedings of eminent domain.
4. Q. What is a road easement?

A. A road easement is the dedicated right to use private property for road purposes.

5. Q. My property has a road easement. Can I build within the easement since it is not being used?
- A. No encroachments are allowed without review and approval under the Department's permit process.
6. Q. There are trees on my property within the road easement. Will the county trim my trees?
- A. Tree trimming (including shrubs) is the responsibility of the owner of the property. The county has no obligation for maintenance nor incurs any liability until such time as a road is constructed and accepted by the county.
7. Q. What is an Offer of Dedication?
- A. An Offer of Dedication essentially preserves a right-of-way for future public use. The county has no rights in the property offered, prior to the acceptance of the offer, except for the right to prohibit structures that might interfere with future public use. The fee owner of the property has custody and control over the property where the offer of dedication exists, except that he/she may not build permanent structures. Also, the County has no obligation for maintenance nor incurs any liability until such time as a road is constructed and accepted by the County.
8. Q. What is a Prescriptive Right?
- A. If a road, improved or unimproved, has been used continuously for a five year period, the right to continue to use the roadway and prohibit the property owner from closing the road may have been acquired. Perfection of such rights would have to be resolved by the involved property owners or adjudicated by the courts.

9. Q. When are Stop Signs installed at intersections?
- A. The county continually monitors traffic volumes and accidents on the county road system. This information is periodically compared against established criteria (called traffic warrants) used to justify the installation of stop controls.
10. Q. Who installs street lights?
- A. Street lights in the valley area are required to be installed in conjunction with new subdivisions as prescribed by improvement standards in the County General Plan. Individual requests for lights must be processed directly through the Southern California Edison Company with all costs (including installation and service fees) to be borne by the proponent.
11. Q. When plowing snow, how does the County determine which roads get plowed first?
- A. The county's initial effort is devoted to opening all primary roads as quickly as possible for two way traffic. Once this is done, these roads are then widened and the secondary (low volume) roads within the County Maintained Road System are plowed.

12. Q. What is Pavement Management?

A. Pavement Management is a computerized system that analyzes the condition of existing pavement based on surface features and supplies a Pavement Condition Index (PCI). Research has established probable pavement life based on the PCI. With this tool the County is able to determine road maintenance and rehabilitation programs to best use available funds.

13. Q. Why are roads chip sealed?

A. Road surfaces are sealed with a thin coat of asphalt and crushed stone to extend the life of the road surface. This also prevents premature pavement failures caused by seepage of water into the sub-base through small cracks.

14. Q. Why doesn't the county regularly sweep the roads?

A. Years ago, street sweeping was curtailed for economic reasons. The county currently uses brooms and sweepers to clean existing streets immediately prior to the application of asphalt overlays and seal coats.

15. Q. Who installs sidewalks, curbs and gutters?

A. Sidewalks are the responsibility of the property owner and are required to be installed in conjunction with new development as prescribed by improvement standards in the County General Plan. However, in certain locations, grant funds are occasionally available for the county to install sidewalk curb and gutter as part of a capacity (widening) project or as a safety issue.

16. Q. My sidewalk needs repair, who do I call?
- A. The property owner is responsible for proper maintenance and repair of sidewalks. A local contractor should be called.
17. Q. Can an individual arbitrarily restrict the use of a County Road?
- A. No. No road in the official County Maintained Road System may be obstructed. There are numerous Non-system dirt roads (trails) crossing private property which are sometimes closed by the property owner. The Department has no jurisdiction or authority on these roads and is prohibited from working on them.

